

Comments of Robert Elliott, Mayor of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, New York, on the Millennium Pipeline Project; Public Hearing, November 13, 2002.

My name is Bob Elliott. I am the Mayor of Croton-on-Hudson. Our community's opposition to the Millennium pipeline is grounded on three factors: its adverse environmental impacts, the availability of alternatives that would serve the purposes of the project while avoiding its detrimental impacts, and the lack of any need for this pipeline.

Other representatives of Croton in the morning session have already discussed in detail the impacts this pipeline would have on our community -- the destruction of significant aquatic habitat in Haverstraw Bay, threatening our Village's drinking water supply, and clear-cutting through our Arboretum and trail system. Allowing the pipeline to be constructed in spite of the many years we have invested into cleaning up the Hudson River, preserving our few-remaining natural open spaces, and protecting our limited drinking water supplies would simply be a tragedy.

However, there is no need for this to occur. Millennium has several alternatives that would permit the project to go forward while avoiding these adverse impacts. Our consultant, O'Brien & Gere Engineers, identified a number of alternatives, including one route that would actually be shorter and less expensive to build than Millennium's proposed route. This route would parallel the Palisades Parkway and cross the Hudson River in the vicinity of the existing Tennessee gas pipeline right-of-way. We understand that this route would require construction along existing roadways and rights-of-way in Rockland County and would not be free of impacts. But the O'Brien & Gere report compared the relative impacts and concluded that this alternative would not only avoid impacts to Haverstraw Bay and other critical resources, but would be a shorter

route overall, with a shorter Hudson River crossing, and would even be less costly to build. And with all due respect to certain speakers in the morning session, there are significant differences between the already-impacted Piermont Marsh, the lower tip of which would be crossed by this alternative, and the pristine habitat of Haverstraw Bay, which Millennium proposes to cross. Based on these findings, we came to the conclusion that this route is clearly the superior one, from both an environmental impact and engineering feasibility perspective.

In support of its proposal, Millennium repeatedly cites to purported skyrocketing energy demands in New York, and claims that its pipeline is necessary for providing additional capacity to serve that demand. We reviewed this issue very carefully, however, and concluded that Millennium's assertions were simply not true. Often, Millennium cited energy reports that are two or three years out-of-date, or to documents issued at the height of the now-debunked California "energy crisis." We looked at New York's recently published 2002 State Energy Plan, and discovered that, not only is demand not as severe as Millennium claims, Millennium's pipeline is not needed to serve any potential increased energy needs. In fact, the 2002 State Energy Plan concludes that: "If no post-2003 pipeline expansion projects are built, the existing gas and oil systems will be adequate to meet all generation scenarios." In sum, outdated and exaggerated projections of energy needs should not be any reason to approve this pipeline in spite of its serious environmental disadvantages -- particularly in light of the numerous demonstrated alternative routes.

In sum, we urge the Department to find that the environmental integrity of our critical coastal resources far outweighs the needs to construct the pipeline in this particular coastal location.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our comments on the Millennium proposal.